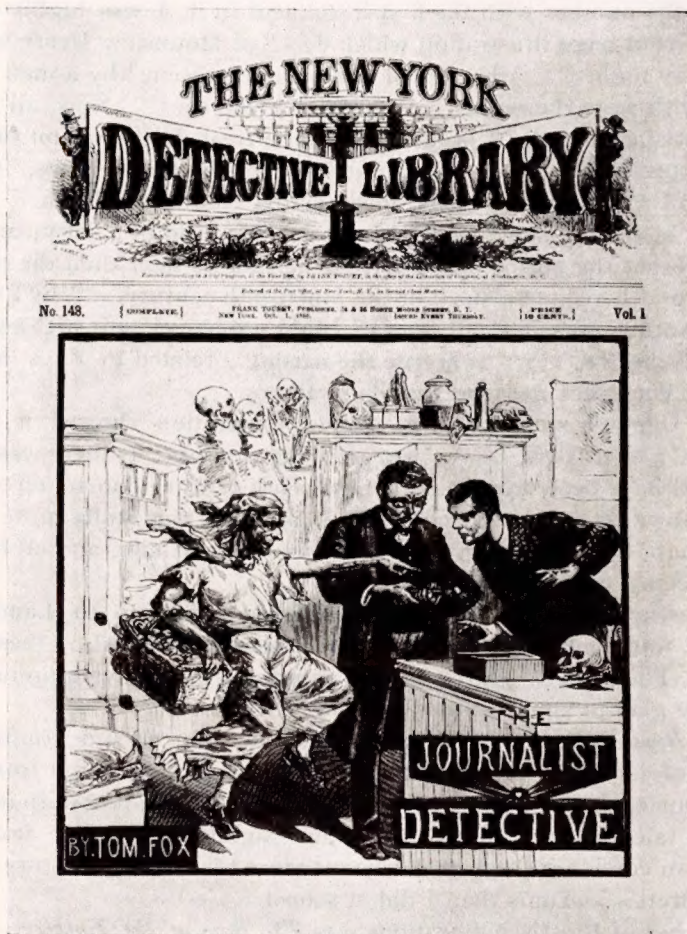


AUGUST 1931

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

OFFICIAL ORGAN HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD



A DIME NOVEL OF THE EIGHTEEN EIGHTIES

FRONT COVER PAGE FRANK TOUSEY'S NEW YORK DETECTIVE LIBRARY

VOLUME ONE

NUMBER EIGHT

## PUTTING LONG TROUSERS ON THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY HENRY STEELE

A little while back, I was fortunate in securing some copies of *The Boys of England* containing a serial story, "Vultures of the Night." The tale was written by Justyn P. Lamb and appeared in the journal in 1891. It was at this period that I was taking in *The Boys of England* weekly.

As was usual, a fortnight before, the story was announced to appear, and I can recall how eagerly I looked forward to its appearance. When I obtained the number with the first instalment in it, I was highly delighted with the front page illustration which depicted Hounslow Heath on "a dark and stormy night." A horseman was being threatened by a man on foot, and beneath were the words, "Dismount or you die!" Now all this was highly satisfactory, and I promised myself a treat, but, alas, on turning the page I experienced a keen disappointment, for the opening ran, "One night in May, 18—, a horseman rode slowly across Hounslow Heath."

As a boy I had some fixed ideas about this kind of a story, and one of them was that the period of the tale should not be later than the eighteenth century, and here was a story in the nineteenth century. Why I was living in that century myself (1891,) and I could not associate it with sword fighters, lonely heaths, etc. It is true the narrative related to days of George IV, but I could not get over that date, 18—.

And this was not all, for the second illustration showed a tramplike character, named Dick Lewis, wearing long trousers. If there was anything that could have been worse than a nineteenth century date for an eighteenth century story, it was long trousers! Dick Lewis was really quite a decent sort of chap, but, believe me, I got to simply detest him, and all because of his nineteenth century long trousers.

Nevertheless, I read the story, which was quite up to Lamb's usual standard, but my enjoyment of it was severely marred by these circumstances. The lapse of years has now wiped out these boyish prejudices and I am very glad to again possess this old-time yarn.

*The Boys of England* was one of the most successful English boys' journals of its day. It was edited by Edwin J. Brett and ran from 1866 to 1899. During its long career, some splendid stories appeared in its pages—historical tales of outstanding merit and significance being featured. I think I can confidently say that I learnt more of English history through reading Brett's journals than I did at school.

Another of Brett's publications was *The Boys of the Empire*, and this lively journal was a great favorite of mine. I took it from No. 1 (February, 1888.) The first two volumes were printed in colors and on excellent paper, and the price was 1½d.

There was another costume anachronism in the pictures for "The Tyrants of the School," one of the tales in this journal. In the illustrations,



all the schoolboy characters wore modern dress, whereas all the older characters were attired in eighteenth century costume !

*The Boys' Comic Journal* was another popular Brett journal, and had a long and successful run.

In a future article, I hope to make a few remarks about the publications of Charles Fox who was a keen rival of Edwin J. Brett.

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## WHY THE HIGH COST OF NOVELS IN POOR CONDITION ?

BY FRANK CUMMINGS

I recently bought some old-time titles in *Wide Awake Library*, *New York Detective Library*, *Beadle's Dime Library*, *Beadle's Half Dime Library* and other novel series. A few were in fine shape, some were in good shape, but most of them were not worth postage to mail to the poorhouse. One specialty which I wanted badly, and which influenced me in buying the lot, was in the poorest shape and yet listed at a high price. Why ?

The story itself was not worth anything, for I could have bought it in a reprint for a nickel. The front cover looked as though it had been through a clothes wringer. When I considered it and all the other poor ones in the shipment, I just had to call it a shame the way times are today.

Not a few operators are making a business of buying old novels as cheaply as possible and then selling high. It would not be so bad if the copies were in fine to good shape. Then you would have something of which to be proud. But with a novel in poor shape in your hands what have you ? Just junk, I say. Try to soak off some of the tape on these rotten fronts and the cover turns to pulp and slips down the drain pipe !

I like good, clean novels at top prices as well as the rest of the boys ; but the prices some of the collectors are getting for copies in poor shape are nothing short of robbery. I cannot understand the high prices. Won't someone please enlighten me ?

Take that story paper for which I paid sixty cents a few years ago, *The Boys of New York*, No. 52, being the issue for August 14, 1876. A low number, it is true. In anything like fair shape, it would have been a corker of an item. But I just could not describe the condition in which it came to me, it was so bad. You could make out an illustration and text instalment on page 5 of one of the early Frank Reade stories, "Frank Reade and His Steam Horse." If it was just a case of being torn, it would have been possible to have repaired it. But it was a rotten paper corpse, not worth a street car transfer, let alone sixty cents cash money.

Anyone having novels or story papers in poor or rotten condition should destroy them. Because when you send them out to the public under any terms of description of condition, they are bound to prove disappointing and hurt your chances of making further trades. Treat your brother collectors as you would like to have them treat you.

## SPANKED AT SEVENTEEN BY THE EDITOR OF GOLDEN HOURS

BY FRED T. SINGLETON

## PART TWO

What I said in my editorial does not matter now. I am unable to recall a single word of the stricture. So far as I know, there is not a copy of my amateur sheet in existence. That is one of the many things for which I have cause to be grateful, after nearly forty years. But what the editor of *Golden Hours* said still stands in black and white for curious old-time story paper fans and amateur journalists to read.

I cannot imagine at this long range just what I expected to accomplish by my criticism of the big weekly. Surely I did not expect to get favorable publicity from it, if any. So that it was with some excitement that I opened an envelope a week or so later addressed to me and bearing the *Golden Hours* corner card. There was nothing in the envelope except the copy of *The Amateur Printer* which I had sent in. But what a bespattered and marked up bit of journalism! The four little pages which I admired so much were literally covered with proof-reader's marks, showing almost every mistake in the printer's calendar. The whole list of typographical errors was represented by bad grammar, misspelled words, letters upside down, wrong word division, etc. And in the margins were written caustic comments on my editorial opinions and the scheme of the paper in general.

A good spanking, indeed! One of the most effective I ever received. Realizing that I had blundered, I wrote a letter of apology to the editor of *Golden Hours* and received promptly a cordial reply. But he added, "with regret," that a frank criticism of my paper had already been written and printed in the paper and that it was too late to stop it. The paper being printed some weeks in advance, the tip of my journalistic lance was dulled for all time by the long wait for the counterblast.

It was not until February of this year, nearly four decades after the foregoing incident, that I learned that William C. Dunn, the editor of *Golden Hours*, was also the printer of Norman L. Munro's publications, and new a lot more about the art and craft than any seventeen-year-old Kansas boy. Mr. Gilbert Patten's interesting and illuminating articles in *The Saturday Evening Post*, "Dime Novel Days," were the source of this information. It was through the latter's friendly relations with Dunn that he became for a while a writer for *Golden Hours*.

Members of Happy Hours Brotherhood who have files of *Golden Hours*, might get fun some rainy Saturday or Sunday afternoon looking up the boomerang. I fix the year as 1893, but it might have been a year earlier or later. I find it impossible at this late date to fix the time exactly. Here is a chance for Brother Robert H. Smeltzer, who has a magnificent run of this paper, to do a little research through the files of his favorite story paper. Let us hear from you, pard!



## ON THE TRAIL OF THE NOVEL HUNTERS

BY "DEADWOOD DICK"

RALPH F. ADIMARE . . . always at the top, alphabetically . . . can entertain you for hours talking about the old-time novels and story papers . . . knows a lot about their publishers, authors and editors . . . should write about them for this magazine.

RALPH F. CUMMINGS . . . I recently spent a day with the publisher of our magazine . . . right in the same room with thousands of novels arranged neatly in chests and drawers . . . and stacked on shelves all around the room . . . hold on to 'em as long as you can, pard !

WILLIAM ERBE . . . remembers when Wehman Brothers, down on Park Row, bought a carload of old black and white *Wide Awake Library* titles . . . and sold 'em out fast at three cents each to downtown office boys and messengers . . . knows how to land 'em in New York.

S. NATHAN . . . saw his stuff in Westfield . . . a big room so full of popular old novels and romantic old story papers that you can hardly move around . . . a loyal reader and collector of 'em for a lifetime . . . knows every angle of our hobby.

I COULD FILL THE MAGAZINE . . . every month . . . with facts and fancies about the novel hunters in and out of Happy Hours Brotherhood . . . read the other articles, too . . . if your name does not show up here at least once a year, try to get your money back !

—:o:—

"LOOK OUT, BOYS, IT'S A PINKERTON !"

The last three or four decades of the nineteenth century rang with those dreadful words of warning to the underworld. "The very name today still suggests sweeping black mustaches, villainous leers, check suits, long black cigars, furtive notes passed in hotel lobbies, gum-shoes, stealthy footsteps at night, secret conclaves in smoky cellars and a heavy hand on the villain's shoulder just as he foreclosed a false mortgage on the farmer's virtuous but bankrupt daughter."

With the foregoing lines begins an interesting review of "The Pinkertons," by Richard Wilmer Rowan, in a recent issue of *The New York Times Book Review*. Here is an illuminating new book for the novel fans who read and stack up the adventures of Old Keen, Old Cap Collier, Old Sleuth, Old King Brady and Nick Carter. But no material here for a comic opera ! It is a revelation of a hard, shrewd and unromantic underworld redolent of the same crime waves and evildoers peculiar to our own restless age.

The exploits of the Pinkertons—from catching counterfeiters and train and bank robbers and protecting graves in a Chicago cemetery from ghouls in the 1850's and through the Civil War at the head of the Federal Secret

Service to catching criminals the world over in the 1880's and 1890's under the famous sign and symbol of the wide-open eye over the arresting caption, "We Never Sleep,"—are as fascinating as any bit of detective fiction ever written. "The Pinkertons" is a key book to all of the old-time detective stories, and should be in the library of every novel stacker.

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### JONNIE JONES' DIARY

(SEE JUNE ISSUE FOR PRIZES OFFERED IF YOU GUESS AUTHOR'S NAME)

#### PART THREE

June 15. Me and the gang played Buflo Bil and the outlaws this afternoon in our back yard. I wuz Bil, my goat Billy wuz my hoss Bear-Paw, Gus wuz Wild Bill, Jim wuz Nick Nomad, Jack wuz the outlaw captain, and Willie Green wuz his gang. Well, we traied them to their muntin cave and I wuz to laso Jack and pul him out of the cave. Jack sez "Well whers your laso?" Sure enuf, whar wuz it? Just then I saw maw's new clos line. "Just the thing," sez I, "she won't care if I borrow it." So I took it, but had no saddle hon to tie it too, so tied it around Bear-Paw's belly.

Well I got Billy (I mean Bear-Paw) goin, and as I rode by I lasoed Jack all rite. Rite around the neck, first cast. But the durned hoss wudn't stop. Dragged Jack all over the yard and then sum. The gang gut scared and started hollerin. Maw cum runnin out, and finally we all together gut the hoss (I mean goat) stopped. Jack wuz all black in the face when we got the laso off his neck, and laid still without movin for a long while. But maw turned water on him and rubbed his hands and chest and finaly he cum two, but wuz arful sick and went home. Maw didn't say much. Only looked at me and said, "Dime novuls, dime novuls." Paw gave me an arful lickin when he gut home. Don't think he wud have dun it if maw had let him alone. After he had whupped me he sez, "Jonny this hurts me more than yu." I sez, "All rite Paw, I'll take your word for it, but it won't hurt yu in the same place as it wil me when we set down to supper."

Paw looked at maw and they both larfed. Funny whut sum people see to larf at. I didn't feel like larfin.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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### CHECK LIST OF POPULAR AMERICAN NOVELS

Item No. 8—The Black Bess Series. Size, 6½ by 9½; one column to page; 100 pages. Fine illustration on front cover, yellow wrappers. Published by Robert M. DeWitt, 33 Rose Street, New York, 1886. 25 cents a copy. Some of the stories were: No. 1, "Black Bess; or, The Knight of the Road"—No. 2, "Turpin in Danger; or, Midnight on the Moor," and many others. An ambitious publishing attempt for its day.



## PARTIAL LIST OF 1931 MEMBERS OF H. H. B.

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110—Gilbert Patten, "Overocks," Camden, Maine (Honorary Member.)

—:0:—

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